

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 L-03 TRSE-00 FMC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1723

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EWWT, UR, US

SUBJECT: MARINE CARGO INSURANCE

REF: (A) STATE 279275, (B) MOSCOW 16232

1. DURING CONVERSATION AT EVENING RECEPTION DECMEBER 2, EMBOFF ASKED MEL'NIKOV, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, WHETHER A RESPONSE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING TO OUR "NON-PAPER" ON MARINE CARGO INSURANCE DELIVERED NOVEMBER 11, IN WASHINGTON, REFTEL A. EMBOFF ADDED THAT WE WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED NOT TO RECEIVE ANY ANSWER TO OUR PROPOSAL TO HOLD MEETINGS IN LONDON NOVEMBER 10-12.

2. MEL'NIKOV RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOW WORKING ON THIS MATTER AND THE U.S. SIDE WOULD RECEIVE AN ANSWER. HE REPEATED HIS EARLIER POSITION, REFTEL B, THAT THE MAIN PROBLEM ON THE SOVIET SIDE WAS THE DEPARTURE FROM THE MINISTRY OF DEPUTY MINISTER ALKHIMOV, WHICH LEFT THE SOVIET TEAM WITHOUT A QUALIFIED CHAIRMAN. NOW THAT VIKTOR M. IVANOV, FORMERLY SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATIVE IN UK AND CHAIRMAN OF FOREIGN TRADE ORGANIZATION, "SOYUZPUSHNINA," HAS BEEN DESIGNATED TO SUCCEED ALKHIMOV, THAT OBSTACLE HAS BEEN OVERCOME.

3. EMBOFF ASKED WHEN WE COULD EXPECT AN ANSWER AND MEL'NIKOV RESPONDED, SOMEWHAT RHETORICALLY, THAT PERHAPS THIS MATTER SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. EMBOFF THEN SAID THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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U.S. SIDE WAS INTERESTED IN RESOLVING THIS ISSUE AS SOON AS

POSSIBLE, AND, IN HIS OPINION, THE U.S. POSITION IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE AFTER JANUARY 20. FURTHER, IN HIS OPINION, A SOVIET PROPOSAL TO MEET SOON WOULD LIKELY BE RECEIVED FAVORABLY. MEL'NIKOV SAID HE WOULD TAKE NOTE OF THIS VIEW AND PROMISED TO CALL WHEN A FORMAL REPLY WAS READY.

4. COMMENT: WHILE MEL'NIKOV WAS CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO ANOTHER MEETING, HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT A POSITIVE REPLY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. HE ALSO SOUGHT TO REASSURE THAT THE MAIN PROBLEM WAS PERSONNEL, NOT POLICY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT SEEMS CLEAR THE SOVIETS ARE ACUTELY AWARE OF THE TIME FACTOR AND MAY VIEW PROGRESS ON MARINE CARGO INSURANCE AS A TOKEN FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. MATLOCK

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